

As a Nation, we will be forever grateful for the ultimate sacrifice both of these men made in service to their fellow sailors and their country. In this 75th year of Explosive Ordnance Disposal, please take the time to remember the important role that EOD techs play in our national security and the risks they take every day to keep us safe.

HONORING THE SERVICE OF GIBBIE BUCHHOLTZ

(Mr. DOLD asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. DOLD. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor Gibbie Buchholtz from Zion, Illinois. Gibbie has lived in Zion his entire life and works tirelessly to bring our community together. He works part time as a cameraman for the Zion Park District filming city council and township meetings.

Gibbie has become a staple in the community, documenting almost every single event in Zion, from local park openings to volunteer events at soup kitchens, to police and firefighter awards. He promotes events and special moments that often go unnoticed, and he recognizes individuals that go above and beyond.

It has been an honor and a privilege to work alongside him in the Zion community. Gibbie never asks for recognition behind the camera, and only asks that people cherish the special moments with others.

Today I am honored to be able to give Gibbie a little bit of recognition for his great service to our community.

Thank you, Gibbie, and keep up the great work.

RECESS

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. THOMPSON of Pennsylvania). Pursuant to clause 12(a) of rule I, the Chair declares the House in recess subject to the call of the Chair.

Accordingly (at 9 o'clock and 13 minutes a.m.), the House stood in recess.

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AFTER RECESS

The recess having expired, the House was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Mr. DOLD) at 10 o'clock and 1 minute a.m.

CONFERENCE REPORT ON S. 2943, NATIONAL DEFENSE AUTHORIZATION ACT FOR FISCAL YEAR 2017

Mr. THORNBERRY. Mr. Speaker, pursuant to House Resolution 937, I call up the conference report on the bill (S. 2943) to authorize appropriations for fiscal year 2017 for military activities of the Department of Defense, for military construction, and for defense activities of the Depart-

ment of Energy, to prescribe military personnel strengths for such fiscal year, and for other purposes, and ask for its immediate consideration.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to House Resolution 937, the conference report is considered read.

(For conference report and statement, see proceedings of the House in Book I of November 30, 2016, at page H6376.)

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman from Texas (Mr. THORNBERRY) and the gentleman from Washington (Mr. SMITH) each will control 30 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Texas.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. THORNBERRY. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days in which to revise and extend their remarks and insert extraneous material on the conference report to accompany S. 2943.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Texas?

There was no objection.

Mr. THORNBERRY. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself 5 minutes.

Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to bring to the House the conference report for the Fiscal Year 2017 National Defense Authorization Act. Once the President signs this measure into law, it will be the 55th consecutive year in which Congresses of both parties and Presidents of both parties have enacted a defense authorization bill.

I want to start by thanking the distinguished gentleman from Washington, Ranking Member SMITH. Not only has he focused on what is good for the troops and good for the country in this bill, that has been his focus throughout this Congress. It has certainly been my pleasure to work with him toward that end. We do not always agree on what is good for the troops and what is good for the country, but we always agree that that comes first. Our work together has certainly been productive, and I appreciate that opportunity.

Ranking Member SMITH and I have a terrific team on the Armed Services Committee; 63 outstanding members, all of whom have contributed to this product. I certainly appreciate the contributions they have made that have made such a large bill possible.

Mr. Speaker, this bill does good things for the men and women who serve our Nation in the military, and it supports our country's national security. I want to just touch on a few of the highlights, starting with the fact that this bill authorizes spending of \$3.2 billion more than the President has requested. Now, that is not nearly enough, and my great hope is that the new incoming administration will submit to Congress a supplemental request that can really get about the job of rebuilding the military, which is so essential.

The \$3.2 billion, in addition to what the President has requested, is focused on people; and that is exactly what the primary focus of this bill is. So, for example, it provides the full pay raise to which the troops are statutorily entitled for the first time in 6 years; that is in this bill. It stops the layoffs of military personnel, which have been going on, and, at least, prevents it from getting any worse.

It starts to stabilize the readiness problems that are making it more and more difficult for our troops to accomplish their mission and increasingly represents a danger to their lives.

It improves the military healthcare system for the benefit of our troops and their families so that they will have a more consistent experience, that they will get better care, more convenient hours, and a number of things that are in this bill.

In addition to the reforms related to military health care, there are a number of very significant reforms in other areas. For example, in acquisition, we try to make sure that not only we get more value for the taxpayer dollars but that we are more agile in being able to get new technology into the hands of the warfighters faster.

We have commissary reform, which maintains the benefit but reduces the burden on the taxpayers.

We have the first comprehensive rewrite of the Uniform Code of Military Justice in 30 years, and that is a big part of the reason that this bill is the size that it is.

We have organizational reform that streamlines the bureaucracy and helps reduce the overhead so more resources can go to the front lines.

There are many items in this bill, Mr. Speaker, from replenishing munitions of which we have shortages to dealing with the California National Guard repayment issue that has come up in recent weeks.

Other speakers will give more detail about many of those provisions. I just want to take this moment, first, to thank the staff on both sides of the aisle for their work in producing this product. We have a unified staff on the Armed Services Committee. We work together to solve problems. And through the ups and downs of the political calendar and all of the other issues that impact our bill, they have done a terrific job in getting us to this point and have served the Nation by doing so. I want to express my appreciation to staff on both sides for that work.

Finally, I also want to pay tribute to the members of our committee who will not be with us in the next Congress for a variety of reasons. They include the gentleman from Virginia (Mr. FORBES), the gentleman from Florida (Mr. MILLER), the gentleman from Minnesota (Mr. KLINE), the gentleman from Louisiana (Mr. FLEMING), the gentleman from New York (Mr. GIBSON), the gentleman from Nevada (Mr. HECK), the gentleman from Florida (Mr. NUGENT), the gentlewoman from